

LUIS SINCO Los Angeles Times

SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES patrol Men's Central Jail. Supervisors have called for monthly progress reports.

Board seeks monitor to oversee reforms

[Jails, from AA1] panel's recommendations, on Tuesday he said he thought better training was more important than altering his command staff.

"I don't agree that structural changes would have eliminated a bad deputy doing a bad thing in the confines of a jail," Baca said. "The bigger crux of the matter is policy, training and supervision."

Baca also said he plans to hire an assistant sheriff to oversee the jails by Jan. 1 and will also implement a two-tiered system under which deputies could choose to remain working in jails or move to another assignment.

Currently, all new sheriff's deputies must serve in the jails after they graduate from the academy and before going on patrol, which

critics say leads to an inexperienced workforce overseeing inmates.

Baca said his department has already started implementing the majority of the panel's recommendations. But he warned that some suggestions would require the department to spend more and add training employees.

"That does take some money," he said.

Baca estimated it would take nearly \$69 million to implement a dozen reforms, such as adding a risk manager to each jail and increasing the number of supervisors.

Chief Executive William T. Fujioka said he planned to meet with sheriff's officials and discuss their staffing requests.

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JAIL REFORM POST TO BE ADDED

WED 10-17-12
LA Times

Supervisors vote to hire special monitor, saying Sheriff's Dept. can't be trusted to end abuse of inmates.

By JASON SONG

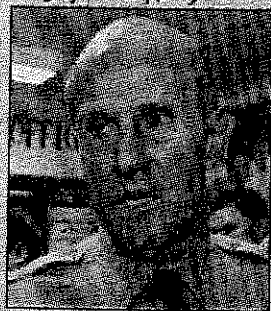
Saying they lack confidence in the Sheriff's Department's ability to clean up its jails, Los Angeles County supervisors voted Tuesday to hire a special monitor to oversee reforms intended to keep deputies from controlling inmates through excessive force.

"I do not believe that [reform] will be effectively accomplished if the department alone is left to make implementation happen," said Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, who led the move for an independent observer.

The board also called for monthly progress reports on the reforms sought by a blue-ribbon panel that it appointed last year. The panel found a pattern of inmate abuse and blamed Sheriff Lee Baca for allowing it to happen despite warnings from civilian watchdogs and inmate advocates.

Supervisors requested that Baca attend each of the meetings to "clearly communicate the status of each and every recommendation adopted by the board," according to the motion, written by Supervisors Gloria Molina and Michael D. Antonovich.

Baca, who has been criticized for being out of touch on jail operations, was in the Middle East state of Qatar last week when supervisors embraced 63 recommendations outlined by the panel.



Associated Press

WED 10-17-12

Monitor will oversee jail reforms

Lacking confidence in the abilities of Sheriff Lee Baca and his staff to curb inmate abuse, L.A. County supervisors vote to hire an observer. **LATEXTRA**

WED 10-17-12 10:14 AM Breeze

County to keep close watch on Baca jail reform

By Christina Villacorte Staff Writer

Determined to see changes in the county's violence-plagued jail system, the Board of Supervisors grilled Sheriff Lee Baca on Tuesday and stressed it intends to make sure he executes the reforms sought by a blue-ribbon panel.

The board sounded skeptical of the sheriff's announcement that he would implement all 63 recommendations of the Citizens Commission on Jail Violence, with Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky commenting, "The devil is in the details."

The board voted unanimously to hire independent monitors to track all the changes taking place at the Sheriff's Department and to have the sheriff present progress reports to the public each month.

It is unclear whether the board can compel the sheriff, an elected official, to attend those

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hearings but county spokesman David Sommers said that question has been rendered moot.

"Sheriff Baca has assured the Board of Supervisors of his cooperation and commitment to the process and any future meetings that may occur," Sommers said.

The commission released a report last month that called for sweeping reforms to a jail system that has faced sharp criticism for practices that have allegedly allowed or encouraged abuse of inmates by deputies. One proposal was to create an Office of Inspector General that would report to the Board of Supervisors to monitor conditions in the jails. Other recommendations included shifts in Baca's top management team.

Baca has said he will embrace the recommendations, but discrepancies between the report and Baca's actual plans emerged Tuesday.

When Yaroslavsky questioned Baca about the proposal to create an inspector general that would provide oversight of the Sheriff's Department, Baca began talking about soliciting applications and being "open" to having the board collaborate with him on the hiring process.

"Stop right there," Yaroslavsky interrupted. "You're not going to select the inspector general. The Board of Supervisors is going to select the inspector general."

Baca said the most challenging reforms to implement are those that cost money.

He estimated hiring additional Internal Affairs investigators, enhancing the training

of deputies, purchasing full body scanners and other proposals would cost about \$70 million.

He also admitted the recommendation to replace some sheriff's deputies with lower-paid civilian custody assistants might run into opposition from unions.

Currently, staffing is 65 percent deputies and 35 percent custody assistants. The Jail Commission said reversing that ratio could result in savings that could be used to pay for other reforms.

Baca said he supported an incremental move to more civilians at the jails but added it would require "continual engagement" with the Professional Peace Officers Association and the Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs.

Of the 63 reforms recommended by the Jail Commission, Baca said he had already implemented 20. Another 31 are in process and 12 others require funding.

Among the first changes Baca implemented was to take Undersheriff Paul Tanaka out of the chain of command that oversees the jail, amid allegations he encouraged deputies to behave aggressively toward inmates.

Baca plans to hire a new assistant sheriff by Jan. 1 who would focus solely on running the jails; several people have already submitted applications.

He is also enhancing the training and career path for deputies in the jails.

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas stressed the urgency of carrying out the reforms, saying lawsuits against the Sheriff's Department have cost the county \$42 million over the past four years.

Supervisor Gloria Molina also pointed out the jails are

under investigation by the FBI.

"I don't think anyone here wants to see us under any kind of a consent decree from the Department of Justice," she said.

"So we want to move swiftly and forcibly and effectively in implementing reforms hopefully to communicate to the Department of Justice that this board is now going to be

clearly a partner in working with you," she added.

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